

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #42

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 30 for a 36-hour period. For the week ending July 21, the Bering River District survey count was 9,900 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 14,400 sockeye salmon. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District systems were fair. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 30 for a 36-hour period. The Miles Lake Sonar was pulled on Thursday July 26 with a final cumulative total of 1,294,400 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to this date is 649,454 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that closed on Friday, July 27 is 5,000 sockeye, 1,500 pink and 500 coho salmon with 49 deliveries reported. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on July 18 was 27%. For the week ending July 21, the Copper River Delta survey count was 44,100 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 32,100 sockeye salmon. During this survey observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were fair. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for a 28-hour period beginning at 8:00 pm on Sunday, July 29. This will be the final drift gillnet fishing period in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict for the season. The drift gillnet fishing season closes by regulation in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict at midnight on July 30. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60° 20.00' N., 147° 26.59' W. to 60° 14.75' N., 147° 35.35' W. to 60° 02.50' N., 147° 44.41' W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect for this fishing period. Harvest for the period that closed on Wednesday, July 25 was 3,900 chum and 1,300 pink salmon with 12 deliveries reported.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District **within the Main Bay Subdistrict and MBH THA and SHA, excluding the AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 30. The AGZ up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 25 was 320 chum, 8,700 sockeye, and 1,600 pink salmon with 89 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District is closed to commercial fishing.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An aerial survey of the Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern and Eshamy districts was flown on Tuesday. An aerial survey of the Eastern and Southeastern districts was flown on Wednesday. Escapement observations for both the Eastern and Southeastern districts have improved significantly since last week's flights, and warrant the commencement of commercial fisheries targeting wild pink and chum salmon in these districts. Aerial surveys for the entirety of Prince William Sound are scheduled for next week.

At this time, VFDA has recommended standing down in Port Valdez to allow for the accumulation of pink salmon needed for broodstock. VFDA estimates at least 300,000 pink salmon secured for broodstock near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon. PWSAC began its pink salmon cost recovery program at AFK, CCH, and WNH on Thursday, July 26, and reports a small buildup of fish in the hatchery SHAs. There is no PWSAC cost recovery harvest to report to this date. Future CPF openings targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon will be determined by cost recovery fishing progress and run entry. ADF&G test fishing in the Southwestern District began on July 23, gauging pink salmon run entry and stock composition. The maximum set size per sample location has ranged from approximately 350 – 500 pink salmon. Stock contribution estimates from Friday, July 27 were 75% hatchery stock origin (SGH= 6%, CCH= 8%, WNH= 29%, and AFK hatchery = 32%) and 25% wild stock origin. Samples of pink salmon caught on July 27 resulted in an estimated 33% female, with a total sample size of 95 fish.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 30. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect for this fishing period. The harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Southwestern District on July 25 is estimated at 120 sockeye, 30,000 pink and 290 chum salmon with 6 deliveries reported. These openings have been intended to target a forecast return of 8,000 remote release sockeye salmon to Marsha Bay. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 – August 1. This will be the final purse seine fishing period targeting sockeye salmon in Marsha Bay for the 2012 season.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Monday, July 30.** Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.